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ABSTRACT

The Pittsburgh Goals Study about which this speech centers is SO 004 019. Issues identified by the leaders questioned which seem particularly crucial for the next five years in the development of Pittsburgh are: pollution control; public welfare system; drug problem; health services; low cost housing; rapid transit. Two more issues, Metropolitan Government, and influx of business and industry, are considered desirable but there is relative pessimism regarding the chances that something will be accomplished in five years. Three impediments to development of any of these issues are: 1) the community leaders; disenchangment with Republican and Democrat politics, politicians and political organization; 2) pessimism on the part of community leaders; 3) the feeling that an inspirational and catalytic leadership linking patterns of governance with the larger body politic of the community does not exist. Knowledge of these perspectives may contribute to dialogue conducive to crystallization of concensus, avoidance of conflict, and utilization of conflict dimensions which may be at the core of creative responses to the problems. (Another related document is SO 004 017.) (Author/VLW)

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UNIVERSITY-URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAM

PITTSBURGH GOALS: SOME ISSUES

OCTOBER 21, 1971

by

Jiri Nehnevajsa

This paper was prepared for presentation at the October 21, 1971, University of Pittsburgh Community-University Forum on Conflict Management.

Albert C. Van Dusen, Ph.D.
Secretary of the University
(Vice Chancellor)
Principal Investigator

Robert C. Brictson, Ph.D.
Director of Research Programs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have all received a summary of the first phase of the Pittsburgh Goals Study. Therefore, I propose to refrain from repeating what is already contained in that brief document. Instead, I would like to highlight some additional findings.

Even so, a few points need to be reiterated so that we may place today's discussion into the broader perspective which it calls for.

What I have to say is based on responses of 106 prominent Pittsburgh leaders to a mailed questionnaire. The study reflects their views as of the early Spring of 1971. The participants in the research include leaders in government and the law, business and banking, labor, education, health and welfare, housing and urban development, Black community programs, anti-poverty programs, social service programs of religious organizations, environmental control, media of communications, and others.

We find these leaders deeply concerned with the future of the community. This cannot but be extremely helpful in any effort at mobilizing the precious human resources of the community in its search for means by which to upgrade the quality of life in our whole area.

These leaders are highly receptive to change. This, too, seems very salutory. There is thus very little in the way of interests which would be so entrenched as to seek to maintain the <u>status quo</u> either because it is, itself, seen as satisfying or because of the ever-present risks associated with uncertain consequences of change.

We find these leaders in agreement with each other in terms of the main directions which changes in Pittsburgh <u>ought</u> to take. This

pattern of consensus would also seem to be a factor facilitating development because it permits us to deploy our energies and our know-how chiefly in the direction of identifying viable ways of getting things done, instead of having to mainly convince each other about what it is that needs doing.

There are, of course, at any time numerous things that may need doing, and far too often, limitations of resources - human, physical as well as financial - make it impossible to attend to all of them, or at least, to deal with all of them equally well or at an appropriate pace or at the same time. Thus questions of relative priorities are always as salient as they are bothersome.

Without discussing here the criteria by which we arrive at our conclusions and without discussing the consequences of alternative standards, let me identify the issues which seem particularly crucial in terms of the five year prospects of Pittsburgh.

First, there is recognized urgency to develop, and utilize, new techniques of pollution control and to combat pollution through legal regulations as well. But, of course, the generating of new technologies to cope with pollutants does not depend on community wishes but on successes of the R & D effort on the national, and even international, level and, in turn, the success probabilities are affected by the flow of resources into such R & D even though they are not determined thereby, at least, over any specific predictable time period. Hence, the issue is one which no amount of community concern and dialogue can resolve at the moment unless, and until, such new technologies become available, and their cost-effectiveness will prove to be sufficiently compelling

to foster their speedy adoption. The issue is tied to the possibility of regulating automobile traffic throughout the city - an item which the community leaders also agree upon - but we suspect that no possible solution will prove widely acceptable without dealing with the rapid transit problem first of all. I shall have a little more to say on the Rapid Transit issue shortly.

On the legal front, most community leaders argue that enforcement of existing laws might well suffice so that "new" measures may not be needed, but once again, we cannot but see this matter connected with controls over one of the key sources of pollution, the automobile, and the problem reverts, once again, to the providing of alternative ways of getting into, out of, and around, the city.

Secondly, there is a great deal of sentiment in favor of significant reforms in the public welfare system. But the ideas as to what might be actually done tend to range over a wide spectrum of options: from suggestions that the Federal government should take over all welfare functions to the notion that more reliance should be placed on properly funded private organizations; from the desire to depoliticize the programs to the concept of helping to organize welfare recipients politically so that their voice can be more effectively heard; from an emphasis on the need to cut from welfare rolls all employables so as to be able to provide better for the remaining "legitimate" recipients to a stress upon efforts to so structure the programs as to keep affirming the personal dignity of all recipients rather than being guided solely by economic criteria or by assumptions that problems of the most under-privileged in our midsts can be handled exclusively, or even primarily,

as economic problems.

Thirdly, the community leaders point to the importance of developing new approaches to the drug problem. Not a single one, however, suggests legalization across the board, or even legalization of such drugs as marijuana. The mainstream of thinking on this issue involves greater penalties for pushers and peddlars, and better facilities for users who are willing to do battle with their addiction. And a more general theme emerges as a strategic one in conjunction with drug use and misuse as a whole: many of the leaders feel that the medical profession itself has to develop better standards and better controls over the utilization of all drugs, and that such standards may have to be imposed on the profession by law should the practitioners themselves fail to respond to the need. Fourth, there is emphasis upon improvements in the delivery of health services, and in methods of payment for such services. In this regard, the suggestions run mainly in the direction of increments in non-profit health services; of better overall community planning for delivery systems so as to cut down the costs and improve services due to better coordination which might result, and due to the avoidance of duplication or multiplication of very costly equipment and services.

While there is no sentiment expressed in favor of fully nationalized medical care, there is a feeling in favor of programs which would make adequate financial provisions for our poorer citizens to have access to the best possible health care. At the same time, there is a great emphasis upon approaches which would contribute to the prevention of health problems, by setting up of appropriate low-cost organizations which could advise the citizens and help them.

Fifth, low-cost housing, including housing for the aged, is viewed as an issue which merits special consideration in the coming few years. In this regard, there is a great deal of agreement on some of the things which should not be done, and, somewhat indirectly, on what has to be accomplished. "No more instant slums" is perhaps the key theme. Furthermore, the leaders argue that we should no longer resettle any inhabitants of the city or of the area without first making, and carrying out, systematic plans to have the necessary services available for them, that is, shopping areas, health-related facilities, education, and indeed, transportation. The desirable programs would provide for scattering, rather than concentrating, of housing for the poor, and for smaller, rather than massive, housing complexes.

Furthermore, many of the leaders see this issue on area-wide one thus connected with metropolitanism, in that they do not favor new housing developments in specific locations to merely further the concentration of the poor citizens and, in effect, their segregation, but to disperse them throughout the area - as long as provisions for adequate services other than housing are also made an aspect of the plan.

Sixth, we come to the Rapid Transit issue. It is perhaps most significant that the community leaders refrained from discussing the merits or demerits of a specific system. In fact, Skybus as such is mentioned explicitly only once.

But the main tenor of the arguments is entirely clear: a rapid transit system is badly needed; the community should make a firm decision about the kind of system it is to have and proceed immediately with its implementation; the best system would be one with high legacy,

that is to say, one which is flexible enough to accommodate to needed future alterations, and one which avails itself of a mix of approaches rather than one which would be restricted to any particular technology. But any system would be better than none, and immediate action would not even be soon enough.

Let me now comment on two more issues which have a high mobilizing potential, in this case, because of the desirability associated with them is coupled with relative pessimism regarding the chances that something will be actually accomplished in the coming five years.

The first one of these is the development of a metropolitan government. Convinced that municipalities throughout the county are in opposition, that citizens in the county area are not in favor, and that the county's political parties are not supportive, the community leaders suggest stepwise approaches by and large.

In terms of functions to be performed, many leaders believe that partial metropolitanism could result almost immediately by appropriate agreements on such things as common purchasing by integration of police and fire services, by common approaches to road maintenance, by common approaches to sewage disposal, to the supply of water, to planning of housing for low-income and elderly citizens.

Furthermore, whatever is to be done could be begun by getting only a limited number of interested municipalities together and not necessarily all of them at once, if only to show, by demonstration, that metropolitanism would work, that it would save money, and at the same time, release funds for some of the things which need doing in Pittsburgh and in our whole area.

The second issue of this kind has to do with the desirability of

inducing the influx of new business and industry into Pittsburgh and into the area, especially with a view to diversification of the economic base. The issue gets linked to problems associated with the general tax climate, and many leaders, in turn, relate this to the tax structure of the Commonwealth and to the state of the national economy as a whole. But there is also a good deal of feeling that metropolitan governance might contribute directly toward making the area more appealing to business and industry, and, at the same time, to counteracting the predicted out-migration of already existing businesses and industries into suburbia or even entirely out of the Pittsburgh region.

Now if these issues are some of the high priority problems as defined by the leaders of the community, it would seem worthwhile to mention some of the major impediments which are seen as hampering future progress. I shall confine my remarks to three items only. Their choice is dictated by the frequency with which the leaders refer to them, by the apparent intensity of feelings associated with them, and by their obvious importance to the development programs of the community. To say the least, they are among the major obstacles to be overcome.

First and foremost, the community leaders tend to be quite disenchanted with politics, politicians and political organizations, both Republican and Democratic. This attitude permeates the responses on just about all items, and there is no single instance in which the workings of the existing political order would be identified as avenues to betterment. In each case, the comments are negative. It seems especially crucial to emphasize that these are views not of one or another group of extremists, of one or another group of people with little, or no, access to power, but

attitudes of prominent community leaders who, by definition, have a great deal of power and influence over the affairs of the community. At the minimum, this represents a clearcut and definite challenge to "politics as usual", and heralds demands for reforms within the political system lest much less predictable changes be imposed upon it from without, changes often borne out of the passions of the day.

The second major issue which I would like to mention briefly has to do with the pessimism of many of the community leaders. If the aggregate view justifies an interpretation of "modest optimism", almost half of the leaders actually manifest a good deal of pessimism: the needed things will not get done, Pittsburgh will continue stagnating or will, in fact, deteriorate.

This is invariably connected with the dissatisfaction with the political order. But there is more to this issue than that. In its implications, it is exceptionally disturbing. For the participants in this phase of the Goals Study are individuals in important positions in the community to begin with. They are precisely the kinds of people that might get things done, or, at least, people who can have greater effect than citizens at large.

If many of these community leaders believe that desirable things cannot be accomplished, who is to be optimistic? Who, furthermore, is to get them initiated, and perhaps done, if not those individuals who have acceded to positions of prominence?

The third major issue concerns the feeling that a leadership vacuum seems to exist. I am not referring to the leadership which may come through the election processes in the community, but the kind of

inspirational and catalytic leadership that links patterns of governance with the larger body politic of the community. In this regard, many of the community leaders mention the absence of, and need for, leaders of the Richard King Mellon type and they do not see such leadership emerging anywhere at this time.

Now, I don't know, of course, what the future will be like. But I do know that desires and wishes alone will not make for betterment. And I do know that good intentions and good words will also not in and of themselves produce a world that we would prefer over the present one. I also know that our actions today, individually and collectively, together, independent of one another, and even against one another <u>are</u> the forces out of which the shape of tomorrow will emerge. In turn, these present actions depend very much on what we <u>want</u> to see happen, what we <u>want</u> to prevent, what we <u>expect</u> and why, and on the resources of all kinds which are available to us to invest in the various alternative directions. Indeed, our present actions do depend on our perspectives regarding the future.

Hence, knowledge of some of these perspectives may well contribute to the kind of dialogue which is conducive to the crystallization of consensus, avoidance of the most harmful manifestations of conflict, and utilization of those dimensions of conflict which may well be at the core of creative responses to the genuine and enormous problems of our times.